

## The Power

In the town called Little Whinging, on the street called Privet Drive, in the house labeled number four, and in the smallest bedroom lay a ten year old boy. Anyone looking at the boy would say that he looked unhealthy. He was appallingly thin and always appeared tired. He had brilliant green eyes that shined with life, even through the weariness that drooped his lids. On his forehead was a scar that was reminiscent of a bolt of lightning.

Harry Potter could not tell you why he was so tired lately. For the past year he has been plagued with fatigue. When he first started appearing sickly, his teachers became worried and inquired to his aunt and uncle. That was when he moved into his room. Still, even without the confines of his cupboard, he had the unhealthy, weak look of someone who has been with out nourishment for some time now.

One day, Harry and family was enjoying one of Harry's home made breakfasts when the letterbox clanked. Vernon looked at his nephew, who looked relatively fit, and Harry got the message. When Harry picked up the mail, his eyes widened. He felt lighter than he had in ages. Leafing through it, he noticed one of the letters. It was made of some heavy parchment rather than paper, but what caught his attention was that it was addressed to him. And in green ink no less. Stunned, he walked back into the kitchen and handed his uncle his mail, keeping his own letter. Just as he was breaking the seal, his cousin Dudley, a mammoth of a boy, ruined it.

"Dad! Harry's got something!"

Quick as lightning, Vernon snatched the letter. Harry noticed the fearful expression his uncle gained from the letter and was beyond curious at what it contained, but was suddenly much more tired. He did not put up much of a fight over the letter.

Over the following week, more and more letters arrived for Harry, and not one made into Harry's hand. His uncle seemed to lose a piece of his sanity for each one. At last Vernon cracked and forced everyone into the car. They drove all day with no apparent destination. They stayed in a motel that night and left early the next morning. By that

night, they found themselves on a rock in the middle of the sea, in a small excuse of a shack. Harry, for some reason, was not at all sleepy, even though it was five till midnight. He supposed that might be because in five minutes it would be his birthday.

As soon as Dudley's watch turned twelve, the door to the shack shook with a resounding 'boom.' Harry sat up in surprise as his uncle came charging into the room armed with a rifle. Another 'boom' and the door came off completely, and in stepped the largest man Harry had ever seen. He had to stoop just to stand in the shack. What was more was that this man seemed to resonate with a powerful energy that made Harry smile through his confusion.

"I demand you leave at once sir! You are breaking and entering!"  
'Wow, my uncle is and idiot.' Harry thought with wonder.

"Ah, shaddup Dursley, yeh great prune." And with that, he reached out and bent the rifle into a knot. "Now where's Harry. Ah, there yeh are. Happy Birthday."

"Excuse me, but...who are you?" It seemed impossible that this obviously powerful and important person was interested in Harry, let alone know when his birthday was.

The giant just chuckled and said, "true, I haven't introduced me self yet. The name's Rubeus Hagrid, but yeh can jest call meh Hagrid, everyone does. I'm Keeper of the Keys and the Grounds at Hogwarts. Yeh know all about Hogwarts, oh course."

"Sorry but no, I have no idea what you're talking about."

Vernon chose this time to regain his motor functions. "Now that's enough. I forbid you to tell him anything."

"Dursley!" The giant man, this Hagrid, seemed to be thinking hard. "But, blimey Harry, didn't you ever wonder where your parents learned it all?"

"All what?"

"DURSLEY! You mean to tell me that this boy knows nothin' about, about, anything?" Hagrid yelled in outrage and confusion.

Harry was offended. "Now that's not true, I know math and stuff."

"No I mean about our world, yeh parents' world, Your world." Hagrid clarified with desperation.

"Stop right there. You will tell him nothing else." Hagrid silenced Vernon with a glare.

"What world?" Harry was getting irritated with the guessing game.

"Yeh don't know what yeh are?" He looked crushed. Looking a bit closer, Harry noticed that the man was feeling pity for him, not something he appreciated.

"Apparently not. What am I?"

"Yeh're a wizard Harry."

The first thought in Harry's head was, 'the poor man.' But as he thought about it, he started to remember odd things that had happened when he was feeling a powerful emotion. Plus there was that odd ability to talk to snakes. He always felt stronger after one of these episodes, but that didn't make sense. If he was in fact doing it, wouldn't it have tired him out? Well, maybe it doesn't work that way.

"Yeah, I guess that makes sense. It explains a few things anyway."

"Right, well I guess it's time yeh got yer letter."

The letter itself was nothing special, but the booklist and required materials were interesting. "Hagrid, what does it mean, 'we await your owl'?"

"Oh, that reminds me." And he proceeded to pull parchment, a quill, ink, and a live owl out of pockets in his overcoat. He then wrote a letter, tied it to the owl, and hurled it out into the storm. Then he came back and sat on the couch as though it were perfectly ordinary.

"Oh, okay then." Harry supposed that must be how beings of the magical persuasion communicate over distances.

"And, where am I supposed to get all this stuff anyway?"

"Oh, don' ye worry 'bout tha'. I'll take yeh tomorrow up to London."

'You can get all this in London? Strange.'

"Now just wait one moment. He will not be attending some freakish school for freaks. We swore when we took him in we'd put a stop to all this rubbish. I'll admit there's something strange about the boy, probably nothing a good beating wouldn't have cured, but I will not have one in my house!" 'What?'

"You knew? You knew I'm a wizard and you didn't tell me?" 'Man I hate them.'

"Knew? Of course we knew. How could you not be, with what my dratted sister was. Everyone was so proud to have a 'witch' in the family. I was the only one to see her for what she was, a freak. Then, if you please, she goes and gets herself blown up and we got stuck with you; and I knew you'd be just the same, just as abnormal."

'Wow, do I sense some jealousy from Aunt Petunia...wait a moment.'

"Blown up! You said she died in a car crash!"

"Car crash! A car crash kill Lily and James Potter? Its an outrage!"

"He won't be going!"

"And I'd like to see a great muggle like you try and stop him!"

'Yeah, you great muggle. I wonder what a muggle is.'

"He will be attending Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and he will be learning under the greatest headmaster the school has ever seen: Albus Dumbledore."

"I will not pay for some crackpot old fool to teach him magic tricks!"

"Never insult Albus Dumbledore in front of me." The way he said it just showed how mad he was. Then, he pulled out a pink umbrella and shot a yellow light at Dudley. Dudley screamed and turned his back. Poking out of his pajamas was a curly pig's tail. 'Appropriate.'

Vernon bellowed like a rhinoceros and dragged his family into the other room.

"Shouldn' have lost me temper. Do yeh min' not tellin' anyone at Hogwarts abou' tha'? I'm not really supposed to do magic, strictly speaking."

"Why not?"

"Well, I was expelled. In me third year."

Sensing an uncomfortable topic, Harry redirected the conversation.

"Well, what am I going to do now? You heard him, he won't pay for me to go."

"Don' worry about tha'. Do you think yer parents left yeh with nothin'?"

'Yeah, I kind of did.'

"How about some cake? 'Fraid I might have sat on it at some point, but it'll still taste alright."

And so Harry and Hagrid sat up a while talking about Hogwarts and the wizarding world. Hagrid explained why Harry was famous and about what classes will be like. They were so engrossed in conversation that they didn't even realize how late it was until the sun came up. 'Strange. I can't remember the last time I didn't get a full night's sleep, but I'm not tired at all.' Hagrid did appear tired, but he decided they should get going.

When they stepped outside, an owl swooped down and delivered Hagrid a newspaper. Hagrid gave the owl a little bronze coin and the owl took off. Looking around, Harry noticed that there was only one boat.

"Hagrid, how did you get here?"

"Hmm? Oh, I flew. But we will take this boat. Not really supposed to do magic now that I got yeh. Seems a shame to row though. Would yeh mind if I sped it up a bit?"

"Not at all. I like magic."

While they were speeding back to shore, Hagrid was reading the newspaper. Harry had learned from Vernon that people liked to be left alone while they did this. However, he couldn't help himself.

"Hagrid, how do they choose what house you'll be in?"

"At the opening feast, you try the Sorting Hat on and it tells you which house you belong in."

"How does it choose?"

"Well, there are lots o' factors. The brave and noble go to Gryffindor, the bookish types go to Ravenclaw, the Loyal and hardworking to Hufflepuff, and the cunning and rotten to Slytherin."

"Rotten? You mean that if you're a bad person you go there?"

"Well, no I s'pose not. But more dark wizards an' witches came from Slytherin than any other house." 'Well, it sounds like that's definitely not Hagrid's favorite house.'

They continued to travel to Diagon Alley, as Hagrid said it was called. People kept staring at Hagrid because of his size and because he'd point to perfectly ordinary things like parking meters and say, "look at the things these muggles come up with, eh?" Harry thought it was ridiculously amusing. Finally, they got to a small pub called the Leaky Cauldron.

Everyone here seemed to know Hagrid; Harry supposed he must be a regular. When the man behind the counter noticed Hagrid (which was almost immediately considering his size) he asked, "the usual, Hagrid?"

"Nah, can't today Tom. On official Hogwarts business." he said, laying a hand on Harry's shoulder.

"Bless my soul. It's Harry Potter." He said this with such reverence, Harry thought he might as well be the Pope. Despite the low volume in which Tom made his proclamation, the entire bar suddenly stilled, and Harry was the center of attention.

"Umm, Hi."

After a few seconds of silence, there was a great scraping of chairs and everyone in the bar was shaking his hand. Somewhere in the mass confusion, a man with a twitch in his left eye stepped up. "I-I-It's a p-pleasure to meet you M-Mr. Pott-ter."

"Ah, Professor Quirelle, didn't see yeh there. Harry, this is Professor Quirelle. He's yer Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher this year." The way he said it made Harry think that Hagrid suspected that Quirelle wouldn't be the teacher next year. 'Well, he does look a little frail, though, next to Hagrid, anyone would.'

"Hello, Professor."

"Well, we gotta get goin'. Lots ter buy." And Hagrid proceeded to cut a path to the back door of the pub. When they were in a small courtyard, Hagrid just looked at Harry and smiled. "See, I told yeh yeh were famous."

"Well, it is still strange. I suppose I'll have to get used to it though, if I don't plan to never go out again, though." Hagrid just laughed.

Then Hagrid took out his umbrella and tapped a specific brick on the wall, and an arch way opened to a busy alley way. "Welcome to Diagon alley, Harry."

It was truly amazing. Every thing in the alley seemed to sparkle with an unseen energy. The further in he got, the more exited Harry became. He was trying to look at everything at once. When he hurt his neck turning it too fast, he decided that he should calm down. He decided to save this energy for later. He was liking this too much and didn't know why he wasn't constantly tired any more, but he didn't want to get tired again. Then he saw the wand shop, and without paying attention, his feet just started taking him there. Until Hagrid stopped him.

Chuckling, Hagrid said, "Yeah, yeh'll be needin' one. But we gotta go ter Gringots first; get yer money."

'Right, can't buy stuff without money.' He nodded.

When they got the big white building, Harry noticed the strange looking creature guarding the door. 'This must be a goblin. Bit intimidating.' Inscribed on the door was a poem. 'Even goblin poetry is intimidating.'

They walked up to one of the tellers that was not busy. The goblin looked down at them (those were some tall chairs) and sneered. "Can I help you?"

"Yes, we're here ter visit Mr. Harry Potter's vault, and ter get the, well, you know what in vault 713." At this he handed the goblin an envelope.

"Hmm, I see. And do you have Mr. Potter's key?"

"Oh, right. I got it here some where." Hagrid started digging through his pockets. He had several door mice in one pocket and a whole pile of dog treats in another. "Right here it is." He started putting the stuff back in his pockets. The goblin looked disgusted.

The goblin clapped his hands twice. "Griphook will take you to your vaults."



The new goblin lead them to what looked like an old mine cart. When they got in, they were told to keep all limbs inside the cart. Then it took off.

Harry was having the time of his life. He had never been on a roller coaster, but he imagined it was like this. At one time, he thought he saw a burst of fire down a tunnel to the right, but it went by too fast to tell for sure.

When they stopped, Griphook asked to see the key, and he opened the vault.

"Shit!" "Sorry Hagrid."

Hagrid just chuckled. "It's alright. I imagin my reaction would be the same."

But seriously, that's a lot of gold. 'This is nice. Well, lets get some and spend it.'

When they got back to the cart, Hagrid asked if the cart could go slower, which it either couldn't, or the goblin thought Hagrid's plight was funny. Harry was torn between pity and amusement. When they stopped, Hagrid was very green.

"Stand back." Then the goblin ran a finger down the door, and it dissolved. "If anyone but a Gringots goblin tried that, they'd be sucked in."

"How often do you check if someone's in there?"

"About once every ten years." 'Man that's a scary smile.'

When Harry looked in, all he saw was a grubby little package in a corner, but, for some reason he couldn't explain, he wanted closer to it. He felt hungry, and that package was an all you could eat buffet. His thoughts and feelings confused him, but right now, all that mattered was the package. Then Hagrid put it in his pocket.

"Best not ter tell anyone about this either, Harry."

"...Right" 'What was that.'

One cart ride latter, and they were stepping out into the alley. "Why don' we get yer robes first. While yer there, I can go get meself a pick-me-up at the pub." And in fact, he did look green still.

"ok"

Hagrid walked him to Madam Malkins, then went towards the Leaky Cauldron.

When Harry stepped in, he was immediately accosted by a middle aged woman. "Hogwarts dear? I have another one getting measured right now."

"Actually, I do need the uniform, but I also need a full wardrobe as well."

"Yes, I can see that. Well go on back and we'll get you measured. After we get your robes, you can look around for other clothes."

"Thank you."

She put him up on a little foot stool, and started taking his measurements. Looking over, Harry noticed the blonde boy looking at him.

"You starting this year too?"

The boy looked a little stuck up, but answered kindly enough anyway. "Yeah, my mom's in the apothecary and my dad's looking at wands. Where are your parents?"

"Dead."

"Oh, sorry." He didn't look it. "Well, they were our kind, weren't they?"

"They were a witch and wizard, if that's what you mean." Man, what a ponce.

"Yeah, I don't think they should let the other kind in. I mean they haven't been raised to be like us. By the way, I'm Malfoy, Draco Malfoy."

"Harry Potter."

It seemed that Madam Malkins had finished measuring him. "That's you done. You can go look at your other clothes now."

'Well, at least I don't have to stay here and sign autographs for the ponce.' "Are you really?" 'Spoke too soon. I'll just raise an eyebrow at him and keep going.'

When he had gotten all his clothes (and changed into some of them) he went outside and saw Hagrid there eating ice-cream. He had one for Harry too.

"Thank you."

"Nah, don' think on it."

They walked around getting all the stuff on the list. When they got to the books, Harry bought far more than what he needed. Magic interested him, and he wanted go be good at it.

"Blimey, Harry, Yeh got enough books?"

"Yeah, I want to be good at this magic stuff."

"Yeh're goin' ter Ravenclaw."

"Hmm, maybe."

"Well, yeh're goin' ter be needin' a bigger than normal trunk with all those books. Let's go get one."

They ended up getting the expansion set. It was a trunk with six key wholes. Each one opened a different compartment. One was for books. There were two rows of books and a lever in between them. If

you pushed the lever in one direction, the rows moved in that direction, bringing forth more books and covering up the ones that were there. Harry had no idea where it took the books, but at least he could get them back. Another lead into a room designed to be a potions lab, with a vanishing charm on the ceiling for fumes. There was one that was just a blank 20 x 20 room. The rest were just compartments. He had just enough money left to buy a wand.

"Do yeh really think yeh needed such a big trunk?"

"Not yet, but I might later, once I get wizard stuff to fill it up with."

Hagrid just chuckled.

When they left, Hagrid took him to the pet shop, and against Harry's arguments, bought him a snowy owl as a birthday present.

Harry was still expressing his gratitude when they got to Ollivander's. It was dusty, but every thing tingled with the energy that Harry had come to associate with magic. Hagrid dinged the bell, then sat on a chair, that surprised Harry by supporting Hagrid's weight.

"I thought I might be seeing you soon, Mr. Potter."

Harry jumped. From the sound of the chair cracking, so did Hagrid.

"Mr. Hagrid. Oak, 16 inches, rather bandy wasn't it?" 'Wow, that's a memory.'

"Yes, sir, it was."

"But then, I suppose they snapped it when you were expelled?" His creepy voice was suddenly stern. Weird.

"Er, yes, they did, yes," Hagrid said, shuffling his feet. "I've still got the pieces though."

"You don't use them though, do you?" Hagrid shook his head roughly. Harry noticed him gripping his umbrella, which he had seen Hagrid do magic with, rather tightly. "Well, good."

Then he turned his attention to Harry, or, more specifically, his scar. "And that's where...I'm sorry to say, I sold the wand that did that. Thirteen and a half inches. Yew. Powerful wand, very powerful. If I had known what it was going out into the world to do..." He shook his head. "Well, now Mr. Potter, lets get you measured up. Now which is your wand arm?" He took out a tape measure.

"Well, I'm right handed..."

"Hold out your arm. That's it." And he measured. Everything. "Every Ollivander's wand has a core of a Powerful magical substance, Mr. Potter. We use unicorn hair, phoenix tail feathers, and the heartstrings of dragons. No two Ollivander wands are the same, just as no two unicorns, dragons, or phoenixes are quite the same. And of course, you will never get such good results with another wizard's wand."

It was at this point that Harry noticed that the tape measure was measuring on its own. In between his nostrils no less. Mr. Ollivander was gathering wands and bringing them over to the counter. "That's enough." The tape measure fell to the floor lifeless.

Harry then started trying wands. More like uselessly waving sticks around. Even though he could feel the magic in each and every one of them, none of them reacted to his. The more wands he tried, the happier Ollivander seemed to get.

"Tricky customer, eh? Well, let's see about that." Then he stopped on one wand. "Hmmm. I wonder..." He handed the wand to Harry. "Holly and phoenix feather. Nice and supple."

This was what Harry had been waiting for. He could feel his magic course through his arm to the wand. When he lifted the wand and brought it down swiftly, a stream of shining bright white smoke seemed to pour out. The light it gave burnt everyone's eyes.

This seemed to make Ollivander think. "Curious, very curious," he said, and it wasn't until Harry asked what was curious that he said, "Mr. Potter, I remember every wand I've ever sold. Every single one.

The phoenix that gave the feather for your wand gave another feather, just one other. It is curious that you should be destined to this wand when its brother, why its brother gave you that scar." 'Hmm. That is indeed curious.' "Thirteen and a half inches. Yew. Curious how these things happen. It is the wand that chooses the wizard Mr. Potter. I think we can expect great things from you Mr. Potter. After all, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named did great things. Terrible yes, but great."

Harry spent the rest of the summer reading. He read and reread his school books, until he was sure he would have no problems remembering the important details. Then he started on the extra books he got. One in particular got his attention. Mechanics of Magic by William Power was an incredibly understandable volume detailing how magic worked. It stated that every spell is a combination of magical strength and force of will. The words were a trigger to help weaker wizards and witches focus their will. The more powerful the wizard, the less he had to focus, but the more power each spell took. 'It seems best to be both focused and powerful then.' 'duh'

Harry tried not to use too much energy. He wasn't nearly as tired as he had been before the trip to Diagon Alley, and he didn't want to wear himself into that state. He suspected that in some way, magic helped keep him sustained. That explained why he felt better at the alley and with Hagrid than any time in the past year. However, none of the books mentioned any thing about wizards needing magic to feel energized.

## Chapter 2

On September first, his family drove him to Kings Cross and left him there. When he looked for platform 9 3/4, he was not surprised to not find it. However, the barrier between platforms nine and ten practically shone with magic, much like the barrier into Diagon Alley. However, unlike Diagon Alley, the Magic also made the wall slightly transparent. Not enough to see the other side, just enough to let you know there was another side. Walking up to it, Harry tried to touch it. When his hand passed through, he walked right through. Taking only a moment to gaze at the red train, he helped himself to a compartment in the middle of the train. The one he chose had a girl with bushy hair that seemed to be slightly older, but probably in his year.

"Hi, I'm Harry. "

"Hello. My name is Hermione." 'She sounds like she's surprised I'm talking to her. Must not have had many friends in grade school.'

"Can I sit here?" asked Harry, taking the seat across from here.

"Oh, sure. I don't mind."

"So, what house do you think you'll be in?" 'Yeah, that sounds like a good conversation starter.'

"Well, I've been reading, and Gryffindor sounds like the best by far. I read that that was the one Professor Dumbledore was in. Though, I don't suppose that Ravenclaw would be too bad."

I sounded like she was going to keep going, but Harry cut her off. "So, you are muggleborn?"

She eyed him, as though trying to see if he had a problem with that. "Yeah, so?"

Harry smiled. "Cool. I was raised by muggles, myself. I'm kind of glad not to be the only one who has to read and ask questions to know what anyone is talking about."

She smiled brightly at him. "I know! That's exactly how I feel. I've already applied all my school books to memory, and I've read lots of background books on wizarding history. What books did you read?"

"Well, I learned the school books, too. I also read a bunch of other books on magical theory and application. I'm not too interested in history, myself, but I like the idea of making things happen."

"Yeah, I've tried a few spells, and they've all worked. How about you?"

"Well, I was told that we aren't supposed to do magic outside of school so I didn't try, but I think I could now." And with that he pulled out his wand and concentrated. He had been getting a bit warm, and so he cast a cooling charm on the compartment.

"Hey, now it's cold," she scowled. Harry just smiled and pulled a cloak out of his trunk. He gave it to her and she smiled.

"So, tell me something about yourself."

"Well, I'm Hermione Granger. I suppose I'm a bit of an over achiever. My parents are both dentists. Now you."

"Well, I'm Harry Potter. I-"

"Wait, you're Harry Potter!"

"Yeah. I was hoping you wouldn't have heard of me. I guess you read about me somewhere?"

"Yeah. You were in Modern Wizarding History and The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts and Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century."

"Was I really?"

"You mean you don't know? I would have found out everything if it was me."



"Well, like I said. I'm not interested in history. I know enough about my special history from Hagrid. He's the gamekeeper at Hogwarts. He came to bring me my letter and take me to Diagon Alley on my birthday. He had to deliver the letter because my aunt and uncle were trying to keep the letters from me. They had known all my life that I was a wizard, but they hid it from me, saying that my parents died in a car crash. That still pisses me off."

"Language. And why would they do that?" He thought it was amusing that she corrected him and switched to concerned so quickly.

"Well, my uncle has always hated anything that disrupts his idea of what is normal. Therefore, I, being the embodiment of magic, and thus abnormality, was completely unwelcome in his house. I think my aunt had a little of that as well, but also, she had been jealous of my mother (her sister) for being born 'special' and stealing her parents affection. She transferred that distaste onto me."

"Wow, that's terrible."

"Nah, it wasn't so bad the last year. I have been a bit under the weather for a year. Strangely, I got better just as I started getting the letters."

"What were you sick with."

"I'm not sure. I was just tired all the time. No energy. Tell me something. Does magic make you kind of hyper?"

"What, you mean do I get excited at the prospect?"

"No, I mean does being around magic give you energy?"

"Not that I've noticed."

"How did you feel after going to Diagon Alley."

"Well, it had been a long, emotional day. I was tired."

"Hmm." Harry supposed it was just him, then. Why does magic make him feel better?

"What?"

"Well, when I got back, I had more energy than I had had all year. And I hadn't slept for forty-eight hours. I think, somehow, that I can sustain myself with magic. I haven't read anything like it, but I believe that is what was keeping me sick. The complete absence of magic in my life."

"Maybe you should ask around at Hogwarts?"

Harry smiled at her. "I'd rather not. Most likely, everyone will be staring at me enough, with out adding the freaky magic eater into the factor."

That made her laugh. "Oh, it won't be that bad." Harry raised an eyebrow.

"Hey, why is there a frog in our compartment?"

"That's a toad. It must be someone's pet. We should keep it for them."

"Hagrid says toads are 'uncool' nowadays."

"But if the Great Boy-Who-Lived has one, everyone will want one." 'Oh, aren't you clever.'

"Well, in any case, I would not want to mar my brilliant good looks with warts," Harry said, trying his best to look like Malfoy from Madam Malkins.

Hermione was giggling openly now. She picked up the toad and held it for about ten seconds until a round boy knocked and came in looking like he had been crying. "Has either of you seen...Trevor!" Hermione handed him the toad, smiling kindly at the boy. "Oh, thank you. I'm Neville, by the way, Longbottom."

"Hermione Granger."

"Harry Potter." Harry winced.

Neville jumped and did a double take to his scar. "Oh, I'm sorry for just barging in here on you. I didn't mean to." He probably would have gone on jibbering apologies.

"Calm down. It's cool. Don't worry so much."

"Sorry." And he left.

"Told you it'd be bad." She just laughed at him.

They talked amiably for a while. When the trolley came around, they got some of everything. Neither had much of a sweet tooth, but both were insanely curious about the different kinds of candy.

A little while later, their door opened again, this time admitting Draco Malfoy. "The word is Harry Potter is in this compartment."

"Yes, we met already Draco."

"Wait, so you really are him. I thought you were just making that up."

"Why?"

"You didn't answer me when I asked you." He had a look like he expected everyone to answer when he speaks. 'Ponce.'

"Yeah...well, I am, in fact, Harry Potter. And this is Hermione Granger."

Hermione stood up. "Pleased to meet you."

Malfoy just raised an eyebrow to her. "I thought I told you that the only sort of wizard is a pureblood."

"Wow, you are a ponce, aren't you?" This only seemed to piss him off.

"You'll watch yourself."

"Why? You don't look like you could fight your way out of a paper bag, whether with magic or not. And your monkeys probably don't understand half of what we're saying." Harry was smirking as Malfoy's pink flush got a little darker. As Malfoy was struggling to draw his wand, Harry drew his own and cast the disarming charm. Malfoy's wand went one way and Malfoy went the other. Harry tossed the wand out the compartment and onto the pile of the other three boys. He then closed and locked the door.

"Thanks, but you didn't have to do that." Hermione seemed torn between being grateful and annoyed that he didn't let her defend herself.

"I know, but I've wanted to use that spell on him ever since I learnt it."

"You can't just go around hexing people," she scolded.

"Why?"

"How would you like it if they did it to you?"

"No one would dare hex the Great Harry Potter," Harry smirked at a disapproving Hermione. "Fine, I won't hex him, every time I see him. I will only do it if he sends one at me first."

"Well, alright. But no baiting him to make him try to hex you." Harry just smiled at her.

They talked peacefully until they got to Hogwarts. When they stepped off the train, Harry immediately heard Hagrid's voice yelling, "Firs' years, over here. All righ' there, Harry?" Harry wave.

As they were walking to the boats, Hermione leaned in and whispered, "That is a big man."

Harry chuckled. "Yeah, I think he must be part giant. I feel a lot of magic from him, and it feels different from any other wizard I've met."

They picked a boat with Neville and a red headed boy. He introduced himself as Ron Weasley, and as soon as he found out who Harry was, he fell out of the boat. Climbing back in, he asked if Harry remembered the attack.

"I remember a flash of green light and Voldemort laughing." When he said the name, both Ron and Neville fell out of the boat.

When they climbed back in, they said together, "You said the name!"

"Yeah, so?"

"Cricky, man. Aren't you scared?" asked Ron, slightly flabbergasted, slightly awed.

"Of what?" Harry knew that most of wizarding kind acted this way. He could barely get Hagrid to say the name once, and never after that. Harry thought it was stupid.

"Of You-Know-Who!"

"Are you asking if it scares me to say the name of a man who has not been seen in ten years, and is thought to be dead?"

"Well, yeah."

"No. I'm not."

At this, Hermione couldn't hold her laughs in any more. "Harry, quit teasing them. They were raised to be afraid of the name."

"Well, it's stupid."

By this time, everyone had gotten in a boat and Hagrid started them moving. As they turned a bend, they got their first sight of Hogwarts. As soon as it came into view, however, Harry got a sharp pain in his brain, that immediately spread to his whole body. It vanished as quickly as it came.

Hermione was the only one who noticed. She leaned over and asked if he was ok. "I'm fine. I think my body was just getting used to all the magic in the air." Ron and Neville were too engrossed in staring at Hogwarts to notice the conversation.

They docked and Hagrid left them with an incredibly stern looking woman. She lead them to a room and left them there, while she went to see if the others were ready. While all the students were talking about the sorting, Harry overheard Ron mention wrestling a troll. He burst out laughing.

"So what is it really?" Hermione asked, curiously.

"You just have to try on an old hat," Harry replied, trying to hold in the laughter. Hermione laughed too.

Finally, after an interview with some ghosts, they were led into the Great Hall. The ceiling was charmed to look like the outside sky, and everyone was in awe. The hat sang a funny little song, and the sorting began. Hermione, in accordance to her wishes, was put into Gryffindor. Surprisingly, so was Neville. Malfoy was put into Slytherin. 'Don't want to be in Slytherin.' Finally it was his turn.

Hmm. Difficult. Very Difficult. Very loyal. Plenty of courage, I see. An excellent mind, as well. And a literal thirst for power. Now that is interesting. But where to put you.

'Please not Slytherin.'

Not Slytherin, eh? You could be great you know, and Slytherin could help you on your way to greatness; no doubt about that. But no, you would be miserable sharing a dorm with that great ponce, I know. All right, better be

"GRYFFINDOR!"

Chuckling, Harry hurried over to sit with Hermione. The others were making a big deal about Harry. Especially a couple of twins that looked to be related to Ron, who was just sorted into Gryffindor.

"...Nitwit, blubber, oddment, tweak." And with that, the feast appeared. Harry wasn't hungry, but he ate anyway, because it looked so good. Hermione was talking with another Weasley about classes and Harry was disappointed to hear that classes would be going so slowly. Eventually, the food disappeared and Dumbledore gave another speech. Then they followed Percy up to the dorms. When they got there, the other boys immediately fell asleep. Harry tried, but felt like he would need to be knocked unconscious to fall asleep. Eventually, he gave up and went down stairs to read.

